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ABSTRACT

The Girls to Women Initiative was undertaken by a group of Maryland professionals and volunteers to identify and help meet the needs of Maryland's girls and young women in the 21st century. The professionals and volunteers researched and held conferences examining gender-specific issues concerning health and lifestyle, family life, education, and economics and career choices. They reviewed the information gathered and formulated recommendations for immediate action and for a dramatic change in how Maryland will address issues affecting girls and young women in the future. The recommendations included calls for additional research, policy initiatives, funding, and empowering educational programs to address the following problems affecting girls and young women: (1) behavioral problems and lack of health care; (2) rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and fighting; (3) inadequate access to health information services and health care; (4) inadequate numbers of women in math, science, and technology programs; and (5) poverty, income disparity, and inadequate education/training and community supports for women. (The bibliography lists 19 references. Appendixes, constituting approximately 50% of the document, contain a description of future efforts needed and a report on the November 1997 conference on current and future roles of girls and young women.) (MN)

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GIRLS TO WOMEN: SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

A Report by the Steering Committee of the
Girls to Women Initiative

November, 1999

Convened by

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland
Maryland Commission for Women
Maryland Department of Human Resources
American Association of University Women of Maryland

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Girls to Women:
Setting the Agenda for the 21st Century

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GIRLS TO WOMEN:
SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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Appendix

GIRLS TO WOMEN:
SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

When she spoke to the 1997 Maryland Conference on Girls, Leslie Wolfe, president of the Center for Women's Policy Studies, placed the Maryland girls' agenda in a broader perspective, defining it as a multicultural feminist movement to transform the institutions that govern the lives of women and girls. There have been more than two decades of advances, culminating in the 1995 Beijing Conference, whose legacy was to bring global understanding of the fact that girls' rights and women's rights are human rights. Today, girls everywhere are denouncing remaining sexism and partnering with their older sisters in a powerful activism to create a new world for girls, one that is organized on the principle of social justice. However, much more is needed. Wolfe called for transforming educational curricula to include multiculturalism and feminism, and for teaching boys and men that oppressive and violent behavior is not acceptable. She noted, moreover, that society is still in transition. Those who share the vision of the new order must be agents of change to make institutions increasingly open and responsive to women, and especially, to young girls. We address this report to those agents of change and join in the challenge to create new beginnings, free from the stereotypes and limited expectations of the past.

INTRODUCTION

Indeed, as Wolfe observes, over the past several decades, vast inroads and significant improvements have been made in women's lives, livelihoods and expectations for their futures. Despite such remarkable progress, however, we continue to find disturbing patterns of inequities directed to them, and to girls and young women. Crime, delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, inequities in education, earning power, and low self-esteem are issues that girls, in particular, must deal with today. These issues are compromising girls' lives and those of their families; left unattended, they will continue to limit the effectiveness of a substantial segment of our citizenry. The demands of the new century are such that we as a State and a nation can no longer afford to operate under the old standards.

During the past three years, concerned volunteers from a number of non-profit agencies, community organizations, professional groups and State departments throughout Maryland have worked to understand the issues as they relate to girls and young women. They have researched the literature and reviewed the national statistics on these matters. Closer to home, they have

interviewed the professionals, among them teachers, counselors, health and youth workers. But most importantly, they have listened to young girls.

The study that follows is a compendium of their findings on the status of girls in the State of Maryland. It is focused on five broad areas. Those areas are: girls' health; violence as it affects girls; girls' sexuality; education; and economics and career choices. The researchers attempted to identify specific issues linked to each of the areas from the broad national perspective and from the State level. Their study includes recommendations for action steps in each of the areas. Finally, it calls for radical changes in public policy, supported by targeted funding and appropriate legislation. These research findings suggest, also, that it is imperative that Maryland create a coordinated, gender-specific effort to support the needs and aspirations of its girls and young women.

This report presents the original concepts that led to the research and a discussion of the two conferences – "Agenda for the 21st Century – the Maryland Conference on Girls." The research findings from the general literature are followed by findings specific to the State of Maryland. The report concludes with a series of recommendations and needs for the future, in addition to a list of references and resources.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the 20th century drew to its close, a group of Maryland professionals and volunteers began to express concerns about the plight of girls and young women, and their prospects for a life more abundant in the new century. Inspired by the convergence, in 1997, of three significant anniversaries – the 25th anniversaries of the Maryland Equal Rights Amendment and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts, they began to look at the status of girls and young women. They looked at gender-specific issues concerning health and lifestyle, family life, education, and economics and career choices. They researched the literature on these subjects and also held a series of conferences – the first, the Maryland Conference on Girls (November, 1997); the second, the Maryland Conference for Girls (November, 1998). Information drawn from these conferences and from the research has led to recommendations for immediate action in five specific areas and for a dramatic change in the way the State of Maryland will address issues affecting girls and young women in the future.

The goals of the two conferences were to provide a forum for discussion of issues related to girls and to involve them in the process; to raise public awareness; to develop a plan of action for the next century; and to celebrate the lives of Maryland's girls. Conference issues included education, community, family, careers and employment, lifestyle, self-esteem, girl power, sexuality, diversity and "dreams-to-action." The information that emerged from those discussions was blended into research about girls, nationally and within the state. This report is a result of those conferences, and includes those findings plus a series of recommendations on five areas: girls' health, violence, sexuality, education and economics.

Health. Behavioral problems and lack of health care require empowering educational programs supported by public policy initiatives plus funding for care, activism and physical education.
Violence. Rape, sexual abuse and harassment and fighting among girls are serious problems for which girls need support at home. Activism and research directed at prevention is necessary and funding is needed for gender-specific support programs.
Sexuality. Research is needed to help girls come to terms with their sexuality, and activism is needed to guarantee their access to health information services and health care.
Education. Girls do achieve, but lack math and science role models and get less respect for their abilities. Research is needed on single sex education and on girls' programming for careers and leadership. Funding is needed for women's math, science and technology programs.

Economics. Poverty, income disparity, and inadequate education, training and community supports are serious issues that require research, funding, and also activism to promote awareness of these situations.

The report poses more strategic questions than it suggests solutions, and it reveals some surprising gaps. For example, many agencies' missions include elements relating to youth and to families, but, as the researchers have determined, there is no single organization within State government whose mission is to serve the comprehensive interests and concerns of Maryland's girls. Indeed, the State has begun to take steps to address some of the issues outlined in the report. Its Rape Crisis Centers are available to girls; the State is home to the YWCA's federally supported program for victims of domestic violence; and Maryland has established the Governor's Council for Adolescent Pregnancy, which is within the Governor's Office of Children, Youth and Families. Furthermore, no other state has done a study similar to this one, but many states are looking to Maryland for solutions to gender-specific problems discussed in this report.

Maryland has long been a leader in gender issues and has an outstanding reputation for its exceptional women legislators, educators, doctors, scientists, social welfare and business leaders. It is fitting that Maryland would continue in this time-honored tradition by once again taking the lead and opening new doors.

The findings incorporated in the report "Girls to Women: Setting the Agenda for the 21st Century suggest that the State of Maryland should establish a Governor's task force that can support the development of a "Commission on the Status of Girls." As described in this report's conclusion, such a Commission would "work to identify policies and procedures, along with the persistent forces, conditions and societal patterns that are obstructing the growth and development of today's girls. It would provide the leadership needed to recommend legislative, policy and procedural changes that would reverse this trend. The Commission would work with the State's leadership to determine the appropriate agencies to implement recommended legislation, policies and procedural changes, and help to develop an accurate information system to ensure that policies and law are executed and enforced in the best interests of Maryland's girls."

GIRLS TO WOMEN:
SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

PART I

THE CONCEPT AND THE CONFERENCE

In Maryland, the year 1997 marked three significant anniversary dates - the 25th anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Maryland Constitution, the 25th anniversary of Title IX, and the 85th anniversary of Girl Scouting in America.

In the months prior to the convergence of these three milestones, leaders representing the Maryland Commission for Women and the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland began to discuss what the future held for the nation's women, and what the prospects were for its girls and young women. They began an intensive study of existing academic research, reports, surveys, popular discourse and anecdotal information. They determined that these materials were revealing alarming information about the nation's youth, in general, and, particularly, its young females.

These leaders were especially concerned about girls' health and lifestyle, community and family issues, especially as they pertained to violence, education, and to economics -- more specifically, careers and employment trends affecting young women. They agreed that there was a need to create a public forum that would provide a structured discussion on these and other issues. The leaders also wanted to celebrate the lives of girls in Maryland, and to involve girls in developing a plan for such a forum.

The forum would have two over-arching goals. The first was to raise the interest level of the general public and decision-makers on issues and solutions to problems pertaining to girls. The second was to develop a plan of action that would foster and develop environments and attitudes to help girls value themselves, learn life skills and be healthy and successful women in the 21st century.

"Girls to Women: Agenda for the 21st Century" was the broad theme for two conferences held in

1997 and 1998. The 1997 conference on girls; and was followed by a 1998 conference for girls.

During the first two years, more than a dozen local, regional and national agencies joined the initial sponsors to present intensive forums and workshops on issues relating to girls and young women. Eminent spokeswomen keynoted both conferences and noted authorities led workshops and breakout sessions.

In 1997, the Maryland Department of Human Resources and the American Association of University Women of Maryland joined the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Maryland Commission for Women as partners, and many other public and private entities became sponsors of these efforts. Partners included: the Baltimore County Department of Education – Title I Office, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Statewide Equity Resource Center at the University of Maryland College Park, the Equity Assurance Office of the Maryland State Department of Education and the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center.

THE CONFERENCES

Conference I - Maryland Conference on Girls – November 7 and 8, 1997

The 1997 meeting, entitled the Maryland Conference on Girls, "From Generation to Generation: The Unfinished Agenda" was a two day event held at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County on Friday and Saturday, November 7 and 8. More than 150 girls and adults participated in the conference.

Frances Hughes Glendening, first lady of the State of Maryland, was honorary chair. Leslie Wolfe, president of the Center for Women's Policy Studies, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Elizabeth F. Johnson served as chair of the Conference Steering Committee and Jill Moss Greenberg and Constance Beims co-chaired the conference planning.

The 1997 Conference goals were:

- To provide a forum for a structured discussion on the issues facing today's girls
- To involve girls in developing the plan for the conference
- To raise the interest level of the general public and state decision makers on issues and solutions
- To develop a plan of action for Maryland that would foster and develop environments and attitudes to help girls value themselves, learn life skills and be healthy and successful women in the 21st century, and
- To celebrate and honor the lives of girls in Maryland

.

The conference featured an inter-generational panel, "From Generation to Generation: The Unfinished Agenda," in which three representatives, through age and experience, bridged the past, present and future. They discussed the challenges they had to face in their coming of age, what girls are facing, and what girls of the future will have to face.

The Conference established awards honoring the "Women of Tomorrow" and presented them to three outstanding girls representing grades 6 to 8, 9 to 10 and 11 to 12. The plenary session and a series of workshops were held during the second day of the Conference. And the workshops focussed on education, community issues, family issues, careers and employment, and health and lifestyle.

General workshop topics included:

- **Education**. Discussions concerned gender equity, as a co-educational issue, one that is interrelated with other equity issues such as race and national origin, socio-economic status, disability and sexual orientation. For boys, inequities still exist in harsher discipline; for girls they exist in math and science, in education and in teacher expectations. Sexual harassment and stereotypical sex role expectations continue to exist and women's contributions are not reflected in the curriculum.

- **Community.** Discussions concerned the lack of programs for incarcerated women which would prevent recidivism; the lack of shelters for women with children; the need to identify funds for communities for prevention programs and recreation centers; fear of violence; lack of self esteem; and poor representation of women by the media.

- **Family.** Discussions concerned the family as an institution, one that is constructed with each member's baggage. It is stressed by economic pressures, often fragmented by technology and the media, and suffers under false images created by the media. Violence against girls is an issue, and so is the need to create families where girls can become powerful women, able to

fight back if necessary. There is a need for family role models who do not replicate existing gender stereotypes and whose attitudes can create a healthy environment. Although the structure and role of the family has changed, it continues to be at the center of a girl's life and the primary place of support and guidance.

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- **Careers and Employment**. Discussions included the availability of career options for girls and young women, their job responsibilities and the work ethic, awareness of the hostile environment, career tracking and planning.

- **Health and Lifestyle**. Discussions included self-esteem, nutrition, sexuality, gender disparities in physical activity, physical checkups, mental health, eating disorders, availability of qualified educators, and sexual abuse.

See Appendix I for recommendations and action steps participants proposed for each of these categories of issues.

Conference II -Maryland Conference For Girls – November 8, 1998

The second conference, entitled the Maryland Conference For Girls…Girls to Women: In Their Own Voices, was held at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, on November 8, 1998. It was preceded by a sleepover at the University of Maryland, Baltimore's National Museum of Dentistry. The Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, the Maryland Commission for Women, and the Maryland Department of Human Resources co-sponsored the conference, in partnership with the American Association of University Women of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Education and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

The 1998 conference goals were:

- To refine ideas, issues and proposals that emerged from the 1997 conference
- To keep issues facing girls on the public's agenda
- To ensure outreach to the many faces of Maryland's girls, both geographically and demographically
- To provide a forum for a structured discussion on the issues facing today's girls
- To involve girls in developing the plan for the conference
- To raise the interest level of the general public and decision makers on issues and solutions
- To develop a plan of action that would foster and develop environments that can help girls value themselves, learn life skills, and be healthy and successful women in the 21st century.

As its title suggests, the conference was planned, conducted and attended by girls from across the State. It consisted of a series of morning and afternoon workshops. Again, "Women of Tomorrow" awards were presented to three outstanding girls representing grades 6 to 8, 9 to 10

and 11 to 12.

The six workshops focussed on issues such as self-esteem, diversity, sexuality and date rape, dreams to action, and two Girl Power sessions.

- **Self Esteem.** The workshop focused on self-love, media influence, individuality and taking the high road.

- **Girl Power.** Two Girl Power workshops focused on identifying good choices, recognizing risky behavior, girl empowerment and having a "voice" as it relates to Girl Power.

- **Sexuality and Date Rape.** The workshop focused on sexuality, dating, relationships and date rape prevention.

- **Diversity.** The workshop identified stereotypes and misconceptions that relate to culture, race/ethnicity, gender and physical (people who are physically disabled, sized differently, physically challenged, etc.)

- **Dreams to Action.** The workshop focused on identifying the kinds of efforts that girls would make to plan for the future such as career exploration, including non-traditional opportunities for women, continuing in school, setting goals, and planning.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCES

It was evident to those who had organized the Maryland Conferences On Girls and the Conference For Girls that certain goals had been met. Over the course of a year and a half, the conference organizers had engaged a large number of professionals, community leaders, elected and appointed officials, *and* girls. All of them had become deeply involved in forums that raised issues and attracted broad public attention to the problems and potentials of girls and young women. Through a series of awards, these conferences also celebrated the worth of girls and their commitment to the future of their communities. They also began a tradition that the conference planners and sponsors hope will continue in the future.

It became clear to the conference organizers that the two conferences had highlighted significant areas of concern that warranted additional research and changes in public policy, legislation and funding. Rather than launching a third conference, the planners determined to move immediately to the next level. They blended their research on what was known about girls and

young women, both at the national and State levels. They chose five areas – health, violence, sexuality, education and economics. And, to these findings, they added observations from the two conferences to draw up the following series of recommendations that provide a structure for Maryland's Agenda for Girls for the 21st Century.

PART II
RESEARCH AND STATUS OF GIRLS

NATIONAL DATA AND FINDINGS ON GIRLS
and
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT MARYLAND'S GIRLS

INTRODUCTION

The Girls Report commissioned by the National Council for Research on Women provides the over-arching statement on the status of girls in America:

"Several large-scale, national studies suggest a mixed picture of struggle and progress for U. S. girls. Girls are twice as likely as boys to be depressed (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1990). Too few girls - especially girls of color and girls from low-income homes - participate in sports programs, which have positive physical, psychological, and social benefits (The Commonwealth Fund, 1997, Kann et al., 1996). Girls are as likely as boys to smoke cigarettes, and smoking is on the rise for both sexes (although it is important to note that smoking rates for African American teenage girls are significantly lower than those for African American teenage boys, or girls of other races) (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 1996; Johnston.) In a study conducted among 11 states and the District of Columbia, girls under 18 were found to account for two-thirds of all reported cases of rape (National Victim Center, 1992). In 1996, convicted rape and sexual assault offenders serving time in state prisons confirmed that two-thirds of their victims were under the age of 18, and 58 % said their victims were 12 and younger (Bureau of Statistics, 1997).

However, even as girls continue to face depression, violence, and pressure to engage in high-risk behavior, new evidence suggests more encouraging trends. For instance, the U.S. teen birth rate has declined steadily since 1992, after rising by one-quarter between 1986 and 1991 (Child Trends, Inc. 1996).

In school, girls continue to do well in reading and language, and girls' math achievement is now approximately the same as that of boys (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996; National Science Board, 1996).

In their research, Professor Carol Gilligan and her colleagues at the Harvard Project on the Psychology of Women and the Development of Girls found that "while girls enter puberty feeling strong, capable and wise, they undergo a transformation during which they take their true selves 'underground' and experience a 'loss of voice' emerging as adolescents with less confidence and more negative views of themselves."

The following summary on National Data and Findings has been prepared as a framework to begin research on the status of girls in Maryland. The two conferences, convened by the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the Maryland Commission for Women and the Maryland Chapter of the American Association of University Women, began this effort in Maryland by listening to girls and to adults who work with girls. The Maryland findings gleaned from these two conferences have been included to assist in determining future research and actions.

The research, while limited, is substantive because it shows the limitations of service, education and economic outcomes. It demonstrates how needs are being met (or not met) at a critical stage of girls' lives

This summary has been divided into the following issue area categories:

- Her Health

- Violence in her Life
- Her Sexuality
- Her Education
- Her Economics/Career Choices

"There's a lot of pressure to have sex, drink and do drugs, even in this suburban town."
Age 15

HER HEALTH --NATIONAL DATA AND FINDINGS:

Findings in *The Girls Report,* 1996:

- Leading cause of premature death among women is associated with her behaviors begun in adolescence.

- Girls and women account for 90 % of all causes of eating disorders.
- Overall, smoking is on the rise for girls.
- As of 1996, of all girls 12 to 19 years old who were diagnosed with AIDS, 55 % had contacted HIV through heterosexual contact (compared to only 3 % of diagnosed young men in this age group)
- Teenage girls' participation in sports is linked with decreased incidence of depression, pregnancy and smoking initiation among teenage girls.
- Many girls lack access to health care when they need it.

Findings in case studies conducted by Mary Pipher, as documented in her report, *Reviving Ophelia,* are as follows:

DEPRESSION: "Whatever the outward form of the depression, the inward form is the grieving for the lost self, the authentic girl who has disappeared with adolescence... There are numerous ways in which this death occurs. Some may destroy their true selves in an effort to be socially acceptable. Others strive to be fully feminine and fail. They aren't pretty enough; popular enough in just the right ways at the right times...All girls experience pain at this point in their development. If that pain is blamed on themselves, on their own failures, it manifests itself as depression. If that pain is blamed on others - parents, peers or the culture - it shows up as anger... anger often masks a severe rejection of the self and an enormous sense of loss." (Pipher, p.150)

EATING DISORDERS: "Worshipping the Gods of Thinness" - Mary Pipher

Anorexia: Anorexia is both the result of and a protection against the cultural rule that young women must be beautiful" (Pipher, p. 174)

"Anorexic young women tend to be popular with the opposite sex. They epitomize our cultural definitions of feminine: thin, passive, weak and eager to please... Anorexic women signal with their bodies "I will take up only a small amount of space. I won't get in the way." They signal "I won't be intimidating or threatening". (Pipher, p. 175)

Bulimia: This is the most common disorder among young women. Pipher notes, "Life for bulimic young women becomes a relentless preoccupation with eating, purging and weight. Pleasure is replaced by despair, frenzy and guilt. Like all addictions, bulimia is a compulsive, self-destructive and progressive disorder.

While anorexia often begins in junior high school, bulimia tends to develop in later adolescence. While anorexic girls are perfectionist and controlled, bulimic young women are impulsive and they experience themselves as chronically out of control.

Compulsive Eaters: In her studies, Pipher found "Young women who eat compulsively have learned to use food as a drug that medicates away their emotional pain. This is harmful because they do not learn to deal with emotional pain and because they become obese, which sets them up for much more pain and rejection. It's virtually impossible in America to be heavy and feel good about oneself." Pipher quotes another writer, Susie Orbach, who distinguished between "stomach hungry" which is genuine physical hunger, and "mouth hungry," which is a hunger for something other than food – for attention, rest, stimulation, comfort or love."

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE:
In *Reviving Ophelia,* Pipher's research on adolescents shows three basic motives for chemical use.

- For expanded awareness or the desire to increase sensitivity and insight.
- For thrill seeking and new experiences with peers.
- For the drug effect - to get high.

All of these reasons have in common the desire to achieve an altered state of consciousness.

Pipher notes that chemical use, as a coping strategy, is tremendously appealing to teenage girls, who are often confused, depressed and anxious.

HER HEALTH –MARYLAND DATA ON GIRLS:

BODY IMAGE: Adolescent girls are especially fixated with their changing bodies and want to conform to what society and the media deem "beautiful." While their bodies may be larger than in the past, they also may be malnourished. Food becomes a focus of their existence. Wanting a

sense of control may lead to eating disorders such as bulimia, anorexia, obesity, and malnutrition (Kitchin, Beverly and Gayle Sweeney 1996, 11).

Kids Count Special Report health finding on Maryland girls:

- In 1995, 13 % of females between the ages of 12-19 lacked health insurance.
- In 1995, 13 % of the teen births in Maryland occurred to teen mothers who smoked.
- In 1996, 8 % of the births to teen mothers received inadequate prenatal care.

"All the hate that people show towards one another is really sad. People are sooo mean these days."

VIOLENCE IN HER LIFE - NATIONAL DATA AND STATISTICS:

Findings in *The Girls Report*. The chapter on violence states:

Even as girls strive to maintain their hope and resilience, they face a staggering amount of violence in a variety of forms. Yet research and policy debates about violence and victimization often fail to consider girls' particular experiences, perspectives, and needs. While many girls endure sexual violence, battering and harassment, violence against women is typically cast as a problem facing adults. And although three out of every four child victims/survivors of violence are girls (U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996), violence against children is typically *cast in* gender-neutral terms.

Findings from *The Girls' Report:*

- Current estimates are that one in three and one in four girls are sexually victimized by the time they are 18 years old or seniors in high school. (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994; Benson, 1990).

- Adolescent girls are disproportionately the reported victims of rape. The National Victim Center (1992) found that 62 % of all reported forcible rape cases in 1992 involved victims/survivors who were younger than 17 years old.

- Although adults may be more likely to warn girls about sexual danger posed by strangers, a vast number were raped by family members, friends, or acquaintances. Of them, 96 % of those survivors were under 12 years old; 85 % of those were 12 to 17 years old; and 67 % of those were 18 or older (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1992).

- High school girls who say they have experienced sexual abuse are more likely to report smoking, drinking, and use of illegal drugs than are high school girls who say they had not been abused.

- Reports of peer-to-peer sexual harassment among middle school and high school students are increasing (Seigel, 1995); yet, few cases are filed and even fewer cases are pursued, despite the fact that sexual harassment is illegal.

- Sexual harassment represents an abuse of power, not harmless adolescent teasing, and often includes hateful stereotypes. When allowed to go uninterrupted, sexual harassment harms not only the particular target(s), but also those who witness the harassment (Lee et al., 1996; Stein, 1992; 1995).

- Approximately one-quarter (25.6 %) of all 1995 juvenile arrests in the United States involved girls (FBI, 1996).

- A 1995 survey of readers of girls' magazines conducted by the Center for Women's Policy Studies found that 36 % of girls reported being in a physical fight in the last year. It also found that 84 % of girls reported witnessing physical violence; and that school was the most frequently named place for witnessing violence, followed by television and movies, their homes and neighborhoods.

- Girls often face differential treatment in the juvenile justice system. The system tends to overlook the needs of pregnant or abused girls, and frequently places girls in programs and facilities intended for boys (Girls Incorporated, 1996).

Further information from *The Girls Report* survey included responses on why girls felt that girls commit acts of violence. They are:

- Being a victim of violence (54%)
- Wanting to look tough (50%)
- Lacking a good family (43%)
- Getting even with somebody (41%)
- They need to protect themselves (38%)

A study by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention entitled *Prevention and Parity: Girls in Juvenile Justice* (1996) concluded that the system fails "pregnant or abused teens and often places girls in programs and facilities designed for boys. The report reveals that girls' offenses, far more than boys', are punished more severely than their infractions merit. Girls of color in particular are often judged and treated with undue harshness".

VIOLENCE IN HER LIFE – MARYLAND DATA ON GIRLS

Historically, the majority of youths adjudicated delinquent were young men between 10 and 17 years old. As a result, treatment programs and services have been created to meet the needs of adolescent males. In recent years, the profile of troubled youth referred to Maryland's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has changed and includes a growing number of young women. In 1993, the number of females referred to DJJ or adjudicated delinquent increased 26% over the previous year. Since then female referrals have increased at a slower rate, but they

make up about 22% of all referrals (Kitchin, Beverly and Gayle Sweeney 1996, 3).

The Female Population Task Force, created by the DJJ in 1992, reported in 1996 that "...girls are more likely to be incarcerated for status and minor offences...and held for longer periods of time than males. (*Working With Girls – Making the Connection: A Manual for Case Managers)*

Other findings of DJJ:

- Because as many as perhaps 80 to 95 % of the girls who enter the DJJ system may have been sexually abused in the past, there is a strong likelihood of abuse whether the girls admit to abuse or not. Most girls are unwilling to divulge at intake that they have experienced any abuse even if it occurred many years ago.

  The median age for young women in the system is 15, about 2 months younger than their male counterparts in the system. The majority of the girls are African American. Twenty percent are residents of Baltimore City. About 90 % live in single parent households, mainly with their mothers (Female Population Task Force 1995, 5).

- In 1994, the females in DJJ committed less serious crime, mainly property crimes.

"Someone said that I was a slut.
You always try to pretend what people say about you
doesn't affect you, but it does.
You slowly start to believe what's being said about you."

Age 15

HER SEXUALITY -NATIONAL DATA AND STATISTICS:

The Girls Report had the following key findings on girls' sexuality:

- Of girls aged 15-19, 53 % of Hispanic girls, 49 % of non-Hispanic white girls, and 67 % of
- non-Hispanic black girls reported having had sexual intercourse. Five percent of female students and 13 % of male students reported having had intercourse before age 13 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996).

- The teen birth rate has been declining slowly but steadily since 1992, after rising by one-quarter between 1986 and 1991 and peaking at 62.1 births per 1000 females aged 15-19. In 1995, there were 56.9 births in that category (Child Trends, Inc. 1996). However, the US. teen birth rate remains high, ranging from two to seven times higher than that of comparable industrialized Western nations (More, et al., 1996)

- Teens' use of contraception is increasing: 76 % of those who began having intercourse in the 1990s reported using contraception at first intercourse - up from 64 % in the late 1980s.

- An estimated 65 % of all teen pregnancies are unintended (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997.

- Approximately 25 % of abortions in the United States are performed on adolescent girls. Girls of higher income are more likely to terminate their unintended pregnancies in abortion (75 %) than are girls who are from poor or low-income families (less than 50 %). Eighty-three percent of 15-19 year-old adolescents who gave birth in 1988 were from poor or low-income families.

- While national data exist on age of first intercourse, little data are available on prevalence of other types of girls' sexual activities.

- According to analysis of California birth records, nearly two-thirds (65.5 %) of children born to girls 18 and younger in 1993 were fathered by "post-school-age men, who averaged four years older than their teen partners" (Males and Chew, 1996). But of births to 15-19-year-olds in 1988, only 8 % were to unmarried minors with a partner five or more years older. In one qualitative study, girls reported feeling less able to insist on contraceptive use with older partners than with peers. Girls in adult-teen relationships also often cut ties with peers, families, or school, leaving them with less support for themselves and their children when older partners left (Phillips, 1997).

Pipher reminds us that "Girls face two major sexual issues in America in the 1990s. One is an old issue of coming to terms with their own sexuality, defining a sexual self, making sexual choices and learning to enjoy sex. The other issue concerns the dangers girls face of being sexually assaulted. Of course, these two issues connect at some level and make the development of healthy female sexuality extraordinarily complicated."

Sexual Identity: "Our culture is deeply split about sexuality. We raise our daughters to value themselves as whole people, and the media reduces them to bodies. We are taught by movies and television that sophisticated people are free and spontaneous while we are being warned that casual sex can kill us." Piper continues to report "Sex seems confusing, dangerous, exciting, embarrassing and full of promise.... But girls are scared...They have seen sex associated with female degradation and humiliation."

Victimization: Judy Mann, author of *The Difference* wrote that victimization begins with the "unwelcome touch of girls by boys that we see in the seventh grade, the snapping of bra straps, the sexually explicit comments that boys make to girls - that teachers and administrators routinely ignore. The school gossip mill, the reputation-trashing Monday morning scuttlebutt. In its most tragic form, it shows up in the sexual payoff that is extorted from girls as a price of popularity."

Pipher reminds us that rape is a cultural problem. "Young men need to be socialized in such a way that rape is as unthinkable to them as cannibalism. Sex is currently associated with violence, power, domination and status. The incidence of rape is increasing because our culture's destructive messages about sexuality are increasing."

HER SEXUALITY -MARYLAND DATA ON GIRLS:

PREGNANCY: For a good share of these new mothers, premature parenting will foreshorten their schooling, narrow their personal development, and greatly increase the likelihood that they

will be poor and dependent as young adults. Equally predictable is that the hardship of too-early parenting will be visited upon the next generation (*Kids Count Special Report* 1996, 5).

Kids Count Special Report had the following findings on Maryland girls' sexuality:

- In 1996, 90 % of teen mothers in Maryland were much more likely to be unmarried than teen mothers nationwide (76%) in 1996.

- In 1996, 20 % of all teen births in Maryland were repeat births.

- In the years 1992-1995, the number of abortions per 1,000 females ages 15-19 has been between 20 and 25 %.

- In 1996, the rate of gonorrhea infection in Maryland for females ages 15-19 was substantially above the national rate. For cases per 100,000 females, the national rate was 699 and the Maryland rate was 1, 313.

"Classes need to be geared toward the strength of both sexes rather than having a dominant one."
Age 15.

HER EDUCATION - NATIONAL DATA AND STATISTICS:

The findings of *The Girls Report* are as follows:

- Despite recent concerns about a gender gap in boys' and girls' achievement in math and sciences, girls' math proficiency increased between 1990 and 1996, and no significant differences were found between eighth and twelfth grade boys' and girls' average scale scores in 1996 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997)

- While average science scores showed no significant differences for girls and boys in fourth and eighth grade in 1996, twelfth grade boys, on average, outperformed girls. A higher percentage of boys than girls scored in the highest percentiles in science (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

- While overall gender differences in math and science are not pronounced, girls tend to say they like these subjects less than boys, and they have less confidence in their abilities in these areas. Girls who report enjoying math and science are more likely to have higher self-esteem, to feel better about their schoolwork, to have more faith in their career aspirations, and to have greater confidence about their appearance (AAUW, 1992).

- Girls are more likely to attribute their difficulties in math to personal inability, while boys are more likely to attribute their difficulties to the nature of the subject matter.

- A higher percentage of females (42 %) than males (36 %) attend four-year colleges. The percentage of females attending two-year colleges (22 %) is equal to that of males (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993). While more females than males receive bachelors and masters degrees, more males than females receive doctoral degrees.

- Availability of sex education classes has increased in the last 15 years. However, sex education programs tend to focus on hygiene and biology rather than intimacy and relationships, and they tend to offer only biological, heterosexual images of "normal" sexuality. (Sears, 1992, Moore et al. 1996).

The newly completed study by the American Association of University Women, *Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children,* October 1998, reported the following:

- Girls and boys take the same number of math and science course; however, boys take more computer science and physics.

- While girls are narrowing the gender gap in math and science, technology has become the new "boys' club."

- Boys are more likely to enroll in advanced computer science and graphics courses.

- Girls are significantly more likely than boys to enroll in clerical and data-entry classes, the 1990's version of typing.

- In 1996, girls comprised only 17 % of all test takers in computer science.

Classroom behaviors: Judy Mann in *The Difference* reports that "In the classroom girls learn to be quiet. To be passive. To make do with less time than boys. To get less feedback".

According to Bernie Sander and Roberta Hall, as quoted in Mann, "Professors are more likely to remember men's names, more likely to call on them in class and listen to their answers. Professors feel free to interrupt women students and ask them less challenging questions."

Educational choices: The National Science Foundation estimates a shortfall of 700,000 scientists and engineers by 2010. The Department of Education estimates that one in four of the new jobs created between 1990 - 2000 will be technical positions. Nevertheless, girls still shy away from careers involving math and science. Mann tells us that researchers have identified several factors in this choice:

- Girls quickly identify these interests as masculine.
- They lack role models as teachers and scientists.
- Parents expect their sons to do well in these subjects but not their daughters.
- Teachers have lower expectations of girls.
- Counselors still do not encourage girls to pursue math and science.

HER EDUCATION --MARYLAND DATA ON GIRLS:

Minority Achievement findings on the education of girls in Maryland:

The Maryland School Performance Assessment Program consists of a series of tests administered to students in grades 3, 5 and 8. Students are tested in the areas of reading, writing, language, usage, mathematics, science, and social studies. Females tend to do better, in general, than males.

Nationally, females are suspended at half the rate of males. In Maryland, a larger percentage of all males (approximately 12%) than females (5%) were suspended in 1997.

In Maryland, the rate of graduation had remained stable since 1992. As of 1996, 74.7 % of Maryland students graduate on time. However, Maryland ranks 18th among other states for dropouts. In 1996-1997 males had higher dropout rates than females for all racial/ethnic groups. During that time a total of 234,690 students were served in Maryland schools in 9th through 12th grades, 116,055 females and 118,635 males, of these 10, 944 (4,313 females and 6,628 males) dropped out.

In general, females exceed males in college retention across racial/ethnic groups.

I dream of being a doctor...
I pray to God that I could, but would have to
finish middle school,
high school and college.

HER ECONOMICS - NATIONAL DATA AND STATISTICS:

The general conclusions regarding the economic status of girls in America in *The Girls Report* are as follows:

The economic conditions of girls' families can have an important impact on their health, safety, and access to resources that promote their present and future well being. Even as some economic indicators suggest positive trends in the United States' economy, Census Bureau (1997) data reveal that 36.5 million people lived in poverty in 1996, and 14.4 million people lived in extreme poverty (less than 50 % of their poverty threshold). Studies show vast gender and race discrepancies in income and poverty rates. Among families with children, those headed by females had poverty rates two times that of those headed by males and five and one-half times that of married-couple families.

The economic realities of adult women are suggestive of what adolescent girls can anticipate in their futures. While women's incomes rise with increases in their educational attainment, their incomes at each level of education are lower than those of men with less education. Although the ratio of overall female male earnings among full-time, year-round workers reached an all-time high in 1996, women's median earnings were only 74 % of men's. Significant discrepancies exist among women's income levels: black female-headed families' incomes were 63 % of white female-headed families, and Hispanic female-headed families' incomes were only 52 % of white female-headed families in 1996.

Specific key findings* of the report are as follows:

- Among children under 18 years old in 1992, 17 % of white children, 39 % of Hispanic children and 46 % of black children lived in poverty (Bureau of the Census, 1993).

- Although people of color are disproportionately poor, the overall majority of poor children are white: 61.7 % of poor children are white, 32 % are black, 29.7 % are Hispanic, and 4 % are Asian/Pacific Islander (Bureau of Census, 1997).

- Teen mothers under 20 years old comprised only 7 % of all adult female AFDC recipients in 1995; and of those, 75 % were 18- to 19-year olds. (Administration of Children and Families, 1996).

- Households headed by single mothers comprise by far the poorest demographic group. (Seavey, 1996).

- The percentage of uninsured children was statistically higher in 1996 (14.8 %) than in 1995 (13.8 %); 10.6 million children under 18 were without insurance in 1996.

- One in 12 children lived continuously in poverty for a two-year period in the early 1990s (Shea, 1996)

*based on the assumption that 50 % of the population is female.

Because economic independence can often be the foundation of a woman's power, Mann, in *The Difference,* reminds us that "The most important lesson we can teach our daughters is that they must expect to support themselves." Nevertheless, girls are avoiding the challenging math and science courses that prepare them for the best paying positions.

In addition, many girls from non-white populations in low economic areas are receiving sub-standard education across the board and receive little or no career counseling. *The Girls Report* also notes that changes in the welfare laws "discourage some girls from continuing their education and becoming economically self-sufficient. Unmarried teens should not have to live in a home situation that is dangerous to receive a benefit..."

HER ECONOMICS - MARYLAND DATA ON GIRLS:

There is no source that specifically addresses the economics of girls in Maryland. Except for statistics available through the State of Maryland regarding teen employment, very little information was found on girls, including spending patterns, employability or disposable income.

PART III
CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The significant anniversaries – the 25th anniversary of Maryland's Equal Rights Amendment, Title IX, and the Girl Scouts led to a three year study of girls and young women – their current status and their future prospects. There has emerged, through a series of conferences about girls and through extensive research on the national and State level, a compendium of observations and recommendations related to girls as they enter the 21st century. That material has been focused, in this report, on five areas: health, violence, sexuality, education and economics.

On health – behavioral problems such as substance abuse and eating disorders, and sexual involvement, depression, lack of health care, require empowering educational programs to enable girls and young women to make intelligent choices. These programs must be supported by public policy initiatives as well as funding for health care, activism and physical education.

On violence – rape, especially by acquaintances, sexual abuse and harassment, and fighting among girls are pervasive; and girls' treatment in the juvenile justice system is not gender-specific. Girls need support at home and elsewhere to reassure them as they deal with such situations as sexual harassment. More research and activism is needed to prevent violence among teen girls; and increased funding must be made available to support gender-specific intervention programs and pre-release employment training.

On sexuality – Although high in the United States, the teen birthrate has declined and contraception use is increasing. Nationally, however, 25% of abortions are performed on teenagers. Girls have difficulty coming to terms with their own sexuality, and they suffer from sexual "victimization." This situation requires more research to enable girls to understand their sexuality. Research is also needed to understand the role of socioeconomic factors; activism to guarantee access to health information services; and monitoring health care reform to assure that girls' requirements are being met.

On education – nationally, girls achieve in math and science, but are less confident in their abilities. Technology has become the new "boys' club." More women receive bachelors and masters degrees, but more men receive doctorates. In class, girls learn to be quiet, less likely to be called on; they lack math and science role models, and parents, teachers and counselors have lower expectations. Even so, in Maryland, at grades 3, 5 and 8, on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program, girls do better than boys, and women also exceed men in college retention rates. Research is needed on single sex education, on girls' programming for career and leadership development. There is a need for funding math, science and technology programs for women.

On economics – poverty among women, especially households headed by single women, continues to be an issue for a large number of American girls and young women. At each level of education, women's incomes are lower than those of men with less education. Education, training and community supports are needed to promote economic independence and funding is needed to support those and other programs. Research to identify poverty's impact on girls, and activism to promote awareness of the incidence and effects of poverty are needed, as well.

There have been recent inroads that are helping to improve the quality of life for Maryland's girls and young women. The State has begun to take steps to address some of the issues outlined in the report. Its Rape Crisis Centers are available to girls; the State is home to the YWCA's federally supported program for victims of domestic violence; and Maryland has established the Governor's Council for Adolescent Pregnancy, which is a program within the Governor's Office of Children, Youth and Families. Much remains to be done, however, on the issues discussed in this report, and on other fronts.

As it has done on so many other occasions, Maryland needs to seize the initiative. Maryland is a leader in dealing with gender-specific problems. It is among 16 states that have included an Equal Rights Amendment to its Constitution. The study, "Girls to Women: Setting the Agenda for the 21st Century," apparently is unlike any conducted by other states, and is attracting attention from many people across the nation who are looking to Maryland for answers to questions raised in this report. Now, Maryland has an opportunity to add to that proud tradition.

Although many agencies' missions include elements relating to youth and to families, there appears to be no single organization within State government whose mission is to serve the comprehensive interests of Maryland's girls. The existence of such an entity would close this gap, and would enable State leaders and professionals to examine the issues and coordinate needed services. This type of initiative could, for the first time, work to assure young women that Maryland is the state in which girls can grow strong.

The designation of a Governor's Task Force, leading to the creation of a "Commission on the Status of Girls," is a strategic beginning. Such a Commission would work to identify policies and procedures, along with the persistent forces, conditions and societal patterns that are obstructing the growth and development of today's girls. It would provide the leadership needed to recommend legislative, policy and procedural changes that would reverse these trends. The Commission could work with the State's leadership to determine the appropriate agencies to implement legislation, policies and procedural changes, and help to establish a reporting system to ensure that legislation and policies are carried out in the best interests of Maryland's girls.

It is imperative that Maryland's leadership guarantees its girls' population the right to realize their full potential, now and in the future. This overview provides an important first step.

Appendix - 1

FUTURE EFFORTS
WHAT IS NEEDED IN MARYLAND
Drawn from findings in from *The Girls' Report*

FRAMING GENDER

Support at home, in the community and the schools is key to positive future transformation of girls to young women. Adults at home and in the community can model respect for women and girls by providing opportunities for girls to become active, vocal and valued. Teachers, counselors and administrators should understand their gender-based assumptions and understand the diversity of girls' self-expression and development. By providing safe communities, we ensure secure spaces for girls to study, talk, work on projects, be educated, play and grow.

More Critical Research. Research should go beyond narrow notions of self-esteem and examine variations in identity development and expression among girls of diverse social backgrounds. It should recognize that while gender is a critical factor in identity development, there is interplay of race, class, culture, health and sexuality as well. Research should emphasize positive aspects of girls' development and investigate positive aspects of girls' lives.

Supportive Public Policy. Public policy should not look to the raising of self-esteem as a cure. It should address the inequities that exist within social institutions and popular culture. Policymakers, as an example, can challenge restrictive welfare reform laws, the prohibition against open discussion of sexuality in schools, and inequitable school funding, etc.

Increased Funding. Funding is needed to develop and implement activities and curricula that stress the accomplishments of people of diverse social groups. Programs are needed that challenge social inequities and support research that stresses collaboration among researchers, adults working with girls, and girls themselves.

HEALTH

Empowering Programs. Health education programs should help empower girls and young women to make choices that they deem healthy and appropriate for their own lives.

Supportive Public Policy. Support programs are needed to educate youth about the risks associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and HIV/AIDS. Policies are also needed to ensure that all adolescents receive the necessary quality health care in appropriate settings.

Increased Funding and Activism. Increased funding and activism are needed to challenge the tobacco and weight-loss industries' targeting of young girls, the restriction of adolescents' access to safer sex information, and the lack of opportunities for, and attention to, girls in sports and physical education programs.

VIOLENCE

Girls' Entitlement. Girls need support at home, in institutions, and in the community to develop their sense of entitlement. That support will enable them to be treated with respect, to refuse unwanted touching and sexual contact, and to be protected and believed when they make claims of sexual harassment.

More Research. Research is needed to understand teen girls' experience with violence and victimization, particularly with battering and domestic violence. The kinds of support that girls require to help them cope must be studied. Research is needed, furthermore, to understand girls who are perpetrators of violence and other crimes. Additional research that examines girls' interactions with the juvenile justice system can identify the skills and resources necessary to prevent them from involvement in the criminal justice system.

Activism. Efforts should continue to counter misrepresentation of girls' and women's experiences by providing comprehensive information on the incidence of violence in females' lives. Advocates need funding to help girls cope with the impact of violence in their lives.

Increased Funding. Funding is needed to provide community-based intervention and prevention services for girls dealing with abuse and related health concerns. There are significant racial, ethnic and cultural variables. DJJ programming must be gender specific. Girls need specific intervention programs and support within the juvenile justice system and in training programs so they can find employment upon release.

SEXUALITY

More Research. Research is needed beyond one-dimensional portrayals of girls' experiences. More research is needed to provide deeper understanding of lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual girls. National surveys must include information of diverse groups of adolescents. Information is needed to understand how socioeconomic factors impact girls' sexual and reproductive options and decisions.

Access. Expanded access is needed to health care and reproductive information and services. More information and confidential access to contraception is vital, as well as information on legal options for terminating pregnancy. Quality medical care is needed to ensure the health of the mother and child if pregnancy is continued.

Monitoring Welfare Reform. The provisions that affect unmarried adolescent mothers and their children need to be monitored for their impact.

Activism. Lobbying is needed to prevail against laws or legislation that threatens and/or prevents adolescents' access to quality, confidential information and services.

EDUCATION

More Research. Single sex and mixed sex education needs to be studied for the impact on girls. Educational research should be broadened to examine girls' experiences, academic achievement, and outcomes in educational environments. Research should also focus on the challenges that multi-cultural, bilingual environments pose.

Implementation of Research Findings. Major organizations such as AAUW have published extensive research findings on curricula, educational environments and programming that would promote girls' career and leadership development. Those findings have not been addressed and their recommendations need to be implemented.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Appropriate sexuality education should be made available to all students beginning in elementary school. These programs should take a multi-cultural approach to help students think critically so that they have the information and strategies to make informed personal health decisions.

Increased Funding. Further funding is needed to promote gender equity and cultural awareness in schools as well as appropriate development training for educators. Funding is also needed to expand programs that offer girls opportunities in math, science, technology and fields of non-traditional occupations.

ECONOMICS

Public Policy. Policy discussion and formation should focus on reducing social conditions that promote poverty and not its victims. Programs are needed that promote the economic independence of girls through education, training and community support. Immigrant support organizations need particular attention.

Education. Education and policy are needed to challenge societal racism that undercuts positive development, opportunity and standards of living between white women and women of color.

Funding. Funding is needed to implement policies that promote equal treatment of women and girls.

Research. Research is needed to identify the differential impacts of poverty on girls and the implications of withdrawing benefits to teenage mothers and their children.

Activism and Awareness. Increased activism is needed to address the incidence and effects of poverty. It is needed also to identify assumptions and practices that stereotype and discriminate against women and girls living in poverty.

Appendix 2

Interim Report

GIRLS TO WOMEN
Agenda for the 21st Century

August, 1998

MARYLAND CONFERENCE ON GIRLS

"From Generation to Generation:
the Unfinished Agenda"

the first in a series of three conferences
to examine the current and future roles
of girls and young women
as they enter the 21st century

November 7 and 8, 1997
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Summer, 1998

Dear Friend of Maryland's Girls:

We are pleased to provide you with the **"Girls to Women: Agenda for the 21st Century"** Interim Report. This effort, originally conceived by the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Maryland Commission for Women, is now in its second year of a three-year effort to foster and develop environments and attitudes that will help girls value themselves, learn life skills, and be healthy and successful women in the 21st Century.

This document provides a synopsis of the first year's effort. During that initial year, the Maryland Department of Human Resources and the Maryland chapter of the American Association of University Women joined us as partners and other many public and private entities became sponsors of these efforts.

We are currently preparing for the 1998 conference which will be held on Saturday, November 7, at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The conference will be organized by Maryland's girls and its participants will be Maryland's girls. We have also begun the nomination process for the second annual Woman of Tomorrow awards which will be presented at the conference.

This interim report is sent to you on behalf of all the sponsors with the highest expectations that you will read it, share it with others, and, most importantly, join with us as we continue to develop an agenda for Maryland's girls to assure productive, healthy, and successful women in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Sandra McNeal
President, GSCM

Fran Tracy-Mumford
Chair, MCW

Elizabeth F. Johnson
Chair, Steering Committee

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MARYLAND CONFERENCE ON GIRLS

Concept and Purpose

The year 1997 marked three important anniversary dates - the 25th anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Maryland Constitution, the 25th anniversary of Title IX, and the 85th anniversary of Girl Scouting in America. With the convergence of the three significant benchmarks, the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Maryland Commission for Women celebrated these important anniversaries with a major conference on girls. Academic research, reports, surveys, popular discourse and anecdotal information are providing increased concerns about our youth, particularly young females. These documented concerns generated this unique collaboration between the Commission and GSCM.

The scope of this collaboration will reach to the year 2000, with follow-up assemblies in 1998 with a Conference FOR Girls and in the Fall of 1999 - a Conference WITH Girls. The 1997 Conference goals sought to:

- Provide a forum for a structured discussion on the issues facing today's girls
- Involve girls in developing the plan for the conference
- Raise the interest level of the general public and decision makers on issues and solutions
- Develop a plan of action that would foster and develop environments and attitudes to help girls value themselves, learn life skills and be healthy and successful women in the 21st century
- Celebrate the lives of girls in Maryland

MARYLAND CONFERENCE ON GIRLS

"Girls to Women: Agenda for the 21st Century"

The first of the three conferences, "Girls to Women: Agenda for the 21st Century" was convened by the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the Maryland Commission for Women and the American Association of University Women. It was held at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County on Friday and Saturday, November 7 and 8, and was co-sponsored by the Baltimore County Department of Education - Title I Office, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Statewide Equity Resource Center at the University of Maryland College Park, the Equity Assurance Office of the Maryland State Department of Education, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, and the BWI Airport Marriott. The Honorary Chair was Mrs. Frances Hughes Glendening, First Lady of Maryland.

DINNER MEETING, NOVEMBER 7, 1998

"From Generation to Generation: The Unfinished Agenda"

A dinner meeting was held on Friday, November 7 in the Albin O.Kuhn Library at UMBC. An inter-generational panel elaborated on the meeting's theme -- "From Generation to Generation: The Unfinished Agenda." Participants included the Honorable Joanne Benson, Maryland General Assembly; Susan J. Reimer, Columnist, *The Baltimore Sun*, and Adriana Rodriquez, a student at Montgomery Blair High School. Joanne Saltzberg, Executive Director, Maryland Commission for Women, was moderator. The participants represented an inter-generational bridging of the past, present, and future, and discussed the challenges they had to face in their coming of age, what girls today are facing, and what girls of the future will have to face.

The Maryland Commission for Women, the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, and the American Association of University Women jointly established the Women of Tomorrow awards to honor girls in grades 6 to 8; 9 to 10, and 11 to 12. These girls received plaques acknowledging their achievements and stock mutual fund shares.

Adriana N'gom, is a senior at Towson High School with a 3.4 point average and member of two honors societies. She will go on to become a social worker and lawyer. Shukri Ahmed Sheikh-Salah, is a tenth grader who is a refugee from Somalia. She has lived in the United States for just one year. She has mastered English as a foreign language, volunteers to help other refugee children, and hopes to become a journalist. Dana Ashley Salas is a sixth grader at New Market Middle School who has gone on to survive a family tragedy and is now an honors student and community volunteer who works with the elderly.

Award selection committee members included Akillah Boston, Lynn Hapchuk, Elayne Hettleman, Rosalind McElrath, Brenda McKinley, Sally Michel, Lisa Philipose and Anna Rosario.

DAY-LONG CONFERENCE - NOVEMBER 8, 1997

"Girls to Women: Agenda for the 21st Century"

On Saturday, November 8, more than 150 girls and adults convened at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County for a plenary session and a series of concurrent workshops which were followed by reports from the various areas and the establishment of an action agenda. Elizabeth Johnson chaired the meeting.

Frances Hughes Glendening, First Lady of Maryland and honorary chair of the conference, congratulated the conference leaders and attendees for their involvement in an initiative that addressed current solutions for problems girls face. She emphasized the long-term benefits of having healthy and whole young women prepared for leadership, and included girls as

active participants throughout the proposed three-year process. She noted the challenges young people experience in their maturation process and the responsibility adults have to provide assistance and support for them. She referred to teen pregnancy, mental illness and drug abuse that run counter to the health and well-being of youth – a top priority or the Glendening administration.

Dr. Leslie Wolfe, president of the Center for Women's Policy Studies, delivered the keynote address. She placed the Maryland girls' agenda in the global perspective, defining it as a multicultural feminist movement to transform the institutions that govern the lives of women and girls. After summing up 25 years of major advances, she alluded to the 1995 Beijing Conference legacy that brought global understanding that girls' and women's rights are human rights. Today, girls everywhere are denouncing remaining sexism and partnering with their older sisters in a powerful activism to create a new world for girls, one that is organized on the principle of social justice. She called for transforming curricula to include multiculturalism and feminism, and for teaching boys and men that oppressive and violent behavior is not acceptable. But society is still in transition, and those who share the vision of the new order must be agents of change to make institutions more open and responsive to women and young girls.

Concurrent focal area workshops dealt with education, community issues, family issues, careers and employment, and health and lifestyle. The following paragraphs are summaries of the discussions and recommendations:

Education:

Facilitators: Linda Shevitz, Susan Shaffer

Resource people/presenters: Diane Swift, Liciana Deniz, Jiuliana Delaoliza, Stephanie Davis, John Mason

Issues concerned gender equity as a co-educational issue, one which is interrelated with other equity issues such as race and national origin, socio-economic status, disability and sexual orientation. For boys, inequities still exist in harsher discipline; for girls they exist in math and science, in education and in teacher expectations. Sexual harassment and stereotypical sex role expectations continue to exist, and women's contributions are not reflected in the curriculum.

Recommendations included intentionally-taught gender equity for students, their families, and their teachers; provision of sexual harassment training throughout schools; infusion of gender equity issues in multicultural plans; and creation of inclusive and gender-fair curriculum and instructional materials.

The group's action steps called for a survey of all schools and colleges of education to determine what gender equity programs exist and for the establishment of a Gender Equity Task Force to review the surveys and make recommendations.

Community

Facilitators: Gloria Bouis, Betsy Morrison

Resource people/presenters: Hon. Lynne Battaglia, Hon. Kenneth Montague, Kay Buser, Karen Richardson, Jo-Ann Mayer Orlinsky

Issues concerned the lack of programs for incarcerated women which would prevent recidivism; the lack of shelters for women with children; the need to identify funds for communities for prevention programs and recreation centers; fear of violence; lack of self esteem; and poor representation of women by the media.

Recommendations included use of recreation centers for girls' programming; linking existing resources, space and programs to existing funding and community groups; utilization of existing grants to deal with crime prevention; and setting program objectives for young women to include self-worth training, crime prevention, empowerment, image, decision making and conflict resolution, and career awareness.

The group's action step called for additional community encouragement to get girls 12 and over to participate in programs. This includes a needs assessment, creative use of existing facilities, collaboration with existing State programs; and centralization of grants information.

Family

Facilitator: Jerdine Nolen Harold

Resourse people and presenters: Jana Gelman, Linda Perlman Gordon, Rae Lipscomb

Issues concerned the family as an institution, one that is constructed with each member's baggage. It is stressed by economic pressures, often fragmented by technology and the media, and suffers under false images created by the media. Violence against girls is an issue, and so is the need to create families where girls can become powerful women, able to fight back if necessary. There is a need for family role models who do not replicate existing gender stereotypes, and whose attitudes can create a healthy environment. Although the structure and role of the family has changed, it continues to be the center of a girl's life and the primary place of support and guidance.

Recommendations included realistic expectations for mothers of young girls; establishment of rational relationships with their daughters; creation of a well-rounded life for their daughters without the baggage from their girlhood; and support from their families. Fathers should confront their own sexism, stop domestic abuse, stay emotionally involved with their daughters, valuing them and expanding their horizons. Like their wives, they should come to terms with their childhoods.

Action steps included use of media to change men's attitudes and actions towards girls and young women.

Career/Employment

Chair: Patty Hawkins

Facilitators/Resource people: Nora Putt, Diana Bailey, Ed Fangman, Donna Hart, Eileen Menton

Issues included the availability of career options for girls and young women, their job responsibilities and the work ethic, awareness of the hostile environment, career tracking and planning.

Recommendations and action plans included in the coming year the identity of information centers -- i.e. Chambers of Commerce, public libraries, and coalition partners; in the following year, the creation of parent centered information on career options to deal with issues of harassment and responsibility; and in the third year, the use of resources to measure enrollment of girls in math and science, and the participation of girls in non-traditional careers.

Health and Lifestyle

Chair: Sol del Ande Eaton

Resource people: Barbara Sullivan, Nancy DePlatchett, Dr.Sonia Nieves, Cindy Fusco

Issues included self-esteem, nutrition, sexuality, gender disparities in physical activity, physical checkups, mental health, eating disorders, qualified educators and sexual abuse. Recommendations included health education and provision of health and mental health services for girls, mentoring and adult support of girls, and organized activities.

Recommendations and action plans included the State's implementation of the NIH health science by-law by creating separate health education courses for girls taught by certified educators. The group also proposed adoption of the Center for Disease

Control (CDC) guidelines for physical activity, a series of mentoring, hotline and structured recreational activities to create emotional and social support systems, and a public education campaign promoting annual medical check-ups for girls.

1997 MARYLAND CONFERENCE ON GIRLS

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Maryland Department of Human Resources

Maryland Commission for Women

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1997 MARYLAND CONFERENCE ON GIRLS

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Appendix 3

1998 CONFERENCE FOR GIRLS

The issues raised and preliminary ideas for a plan of action, as developed in the workshops at the 1997 Conference will be used as the starting point to engage in discussions with girls throughout the state in the Spring of 1998. The second year effort will culminate in the 1998 conference which will be organized, planned and executed by the girls of Maryland.

Conference goals:

- Refine 1997 Conference ideas, issues, proposals, etc., as reported in these proceedings
- Keep issues facing girls on the public agenda
- Ensure outreach to the many faces of Maryland's girls - geographically (urban, rural and suburban) and demographically (ethnic, racial, religious and economic)
- Sponsor seven regional speak-outs -- including City of Baltimore -- for girls
- Sponsor 1998 Conference FOR Girls

Speak-Out goals:

- Provide a forum for girls to identify and address issues and concerns in their own voices
- Provide the results of the 1997 Conference for girls to react to, evaluate and discuss
- Provide girls the opportunity to take leadership and participant roles in 1998 Conference
- Produce Proceedings document

1998 CONFERENCE GOALS

"Girls to Women: In Their Own Voices"

The Conference will:

- Be FOR girls BY girls. Adult women will serve as mentors, advisors, guides and colleagues
- Be planned and attended by representatives of the Maryland girls' population
- Use a synthesis of the 1997 Conference results and speak-out proceedings as a basis for development of the 1998 program conference
- Provide a statewide forum for girls to evaluate issues and make recommendations or solutions
- Include skills development training for advocacy and public relations (e.g. forming a coalition, lobbying, issues research, and shaping the message)
- Celebrate the lives of Maryland girls
- Confer the second annual "Women of Tomorrow" award

Girls to Women:
Agenda for the 21st Century

Maryland Conference For Girls

The second conference, entitled the Maryland Conference For Girls…Girls to Women: In Their Own Voices, was held at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, on November 8, 1998. It was preceded by a sleepover at the University of Maryland, Baltimore's National Museum of Dentistry. The Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, the Maryland Commission for Women, and the Maryland Department of Human Resources sponsored the conference, in partnership with the American Association of University Women-Maryland, the Maryland Department of Education and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

The 1998 conference goals were to refine ideas, issues and proposals that emerged from the 1997 event; to keep issues facing girls on the public's agenda; and to ensure outreach to the many faces of Maryland's girls, both geographically and demographically; provide a forum for a structured discussion on the issues facing today's girls; to involve girls in developing the plan for the conference; to raise the interest level of the general public and decision makers on issues and solutions; and to develop a plan of action that will foster and develop environments that will help girls value themselves, learn life skills, and be healthy and successful women in the 21st century.

As the title suggests, the conference was planned and conducted by girls from across the State. It consisted of a series of morning and afternoon workshops. Again, "Women of Tomorrow" awards were presented to three outstanding girls representing grades 6 to 8, 9 to 10 and 11 to 12.

The six workshops dealt with self-esteem, diversity, sexuality and date rape, dream to action, and two Girl Power sessions.

SELF ESTEEM

The Self-Esteem Workshop focused on self-love, media influence, individuality and taking the high road. A quote from Bernard Shaw, emphasizing individual accountability, set the tone for the workshop. Participants reflected on self and love. The girls felt that forever, *acceptable, dedication, loyalty, kind, patience, confidence, caring, faith, God, agape, sharing, comfortable and equality* were words that express love; and that: *showing the above traits, having patience, respect for self, treating others as you want to be treated, accepting your body, living yourself out loud, being proud of what you can do, having achievements and forgiving yourself* are ways of showing love for self. *The group agreed that love is about setting a balance, setting priorities and boundaries and saying No.* The girls concluded that the media *is highly critical of certain*

groups, see youth as people who can't make up their own minds, emphasize bad before good, it often suggest that women will not and cannot be successful (should stay at home and have kids.), and that youth are trouble and are looking for trouble.

GIRL POWER

There were two Girl Power workshops. One focussed on how to identify good choices, recognizing risky behavior, girl empowerment and having a voice as it relates to Girl Power. The girls were encouraged to interact in defining the term Girl Power.
They defined Girl Power as *girls sticking up for themselves, love and trust of self, knowledge, being able to communicate, electricity, control and being proud of who you are.* The girls said when they hear Girl Power they *think of Spice Girls, positive thinking, the power of prayer and that strength and wisdom comes from God.* They think *of greatness, strength and confidence, people praising you.* They recognize that *making good choices can be identified by feeling good about one's self, positive results, people commending you, fulfillment of one's goal, no hesitation.*

On the other hand they felt that *risky behavior encompasses sex at an early age which may result in pregnancy and STDs, joining gangs, eating disorders, being a follower and not a leader, suicide, staying out late, stealing, disrespect of elders.* The ways to recognize risky behavior are *grades dropping, quick attitude change, disrespecting peers, negative personality, giving up, feeling stress or under pressure, not able to look at yourself in the mirror, and blaming others for what you do.* Girls would like to know *if there is a right or a wrong regarding risky behavior, i.e., drug use and teen pregnancy.*

Girls felt that *dedication and motivation were key to empowerment; they could empower themselves by listening to mother, doing homework, helping others, not drinking alcohol, not doing drugs, not fighting, studying for a test, being goals oriented, staying a way from toxic people, and learning from your mistakes.* Some girls expressed that the girls *should be nice to each other at the conference and respect each other.*

Having a voice as it relates to Girl Power was expressed in many ways doing the two sessions. Some girls felt it was important to *have a voice to get your point across and to speak up for your self. The girls felt that if girls don't have a voice then you can't get by in life and, people will run over you. Teen pregnancy was discussed about whether it was a bad decision or not to have a child so young.* Teen mother participant felt that *being pregnant for the second time was not a bad decision and did not cut her life short."* She expressed that she *made an educated decision about her pregnancy.* Two other teen mothers spoke in support of having a child. Girls would like to discuss further the difference between who you are and what your job is.

SEXUALITY and DATE RAPE

The Sexuality & Date Rape workshop was focussed on sexuality, dating, relationships and date rape prevention.

The girls discussed the advantages of being female and talked about the importance of culture in defining sexuality. Myths about friends and companions, homosexuality and rape victims were discussed. The girls defined a friend *as someone who helps you in bad situations, someone who is always there for you, someone you want to be with at all times, someone you go to when troubled, and someone who makes you a better person.* Homosexuality myths were identified *as gay people being evil, perverted, pedophiles, out for everyone, sissies, easy, demon possessed and as those who are automatically carriers of AIDS.*

Rape was discussed and it was clearly defined that it is not about sex. It is about power, rage and anger. The girls understood that anyone could be raped. They felt that *red flags to date rape were things such as guys who are disrespectful, the way they look at and touch you, and those who seem overpowering and use drugs and alcohol.* Myths associated with date rape are, *girls are flirtatious, secretly want it, drunk or light headed, wear slutty clothes, snobby and a tease.*

To prevent date rape, the girls felt that *females should not walk alone on dark streets at night; they should not be provocative or wear provocative clothes; they should not allow politeness to get one into disastrous situations; should not get into situations one would not feel comfortable in; and should not allow alcohol and drugs to put one in a bad situation.* On the other hand they *felt that girls should double date, get to know a boy very well before dating, know one's own limits, get away if one see "signs," learn self-defense measures "dress classy, not trashy" and know surroundings.*
The girls also wanted to know more about sexual harassment in school.

DIVERSITY

The focus of the Diversity workshop was to identify stereotypes and misconceptions that relate to culture, race/ethnicity, gender and physical (people who are physically disable, sized differently, physically challenged, etc.)

Stereotyping and prejudices were discussed, and then participants stated a stereotype that she knew about. These included girls who "*think they are pretty are snobs, men think women can't do the same things as men, adolescent girls with babies may be seen as lazy or irresponsible, and people from India are smart "nerds.*" The girls were given activities that labeled them and later did the same activities without labels. They admitted *feeling stupid and embarrassed when judged by their peers.* They discussed the differences between situations and what they thought about them.

DREAMS TO ACTION

The Dreams to Action workshop focused on identifying the kinds of things young people would do to plan for the future such as career exploration, including untraditional opportunities for women, continuing in school, setting goals, and planning. The girls brainstormed many career options and talked about school courses and other activities that would be helpful in long range planning, especially for untraditional careers for women. Below are actual expressions by some of the girls in the session regarding their future:

Someday I would like to finish middle school. High school and college. When I get out of school, I would like to teach English for young elementary students:). I also want to become a famous singer. I am in the choir at church and the 7th grade chorus. I got a 91% in English the first month. I'd also like to travel the world.

I dream of being a doctor, singer, or a model. I pray to God that I could, but would have to finish middle school, high school and college.

I dream to get a 16th thoroughbred gelding and take him to the Olympics and win the gold medal.

I would like to be a dentist, childcare worker with disabled kids, or a cosmetologist. My goals are to finish college and doing my best in school and homework

One day I would like to play basketball in the WNBA. Ways that I can achieve my goal are by praying to God and getting my full education, and going to practice almost every day.

Women of Tomorrow Awards

The Women of Tomorrow Awards are given jointly by the American Association of University Women, the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Maryland Commission for Women. The awards honor girls in grades 6 to 8, 9 to 10 and 11 to 12. Awards were made during the 1997 Conference on Girls and the 1998 Conference for Girls. Awardees, who represented three age groups, received plaques acknowledging their achievements and as well as stock mutual fund shares or bonds.

Women of Tomorrow Awardees

November 7, 1997

Adriana N'gom. Senior, Towson High School. N'Gom holds a 3.4 average and is a member of two honor societies. She will continue her education to become a social worker and lawyer.

Shukri Ahmed Sheikh-Salah. 10th grade. Sheikh-Salah is a refugee from Somalia who has lived in the United States for just one year. She has mastered English a foreign language, volunteers to help other refugee children, and hopes to become a journalist.

Dana Ashley Salas. 6th grade, New Market Middle School. Salas has survived a family tragedy and is now an honor student and community volunteer who works with the elderly.

November 8, 1998

Katrina M. Scott. Senior, Baltimore City College. Scott has a 3.73 average. She served as U.S. Ambassador to a global conference on young people in Portugal; is a community volunteer, and has been named *Baltimore Times* Student of the Year (1998).

Maitoi Evette Woods. Sophomore, Sherwood High School. Woods has a 4.0 average. She is an award-winning writer, plays the violin and as a community volunteer, teaches writing in area schools. Although she wears a prosthesis on one leg, she works around her disability to serve and to strive to meet her goals.

Jameta Racquel Rooth. 6th grade, Charles Carroll of Carrollton Elementary-Middle School. Rooth has grown up with the knowledge of drugs as they destroy families and communities. She counsels children in the Douglas Homes to "Just Say No." She works with community children to teach the 3 r's and hopes to go to college to become a teacher.

Conference Contributors

Associated Black Charities
Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream
BET Weekend
Black Mental Health Alliance
Blockbuster Videos
Bryn Mawr School
DavCo Restaurants (Wendy's)
Federal Express
Florence Crittenton Services, Inc.
Friends of the Family, Inc.
Geppi's Comic World
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03

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